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RUDY VAN GELDER

Chris Hovan's Interview

with the Legendary Jazz Recording Engineer is Revisited
as Blue Note's RVG Reissue Series Reaches 150 Titles

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Jazz & Blues Report

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RUDY VAN GELDER INTERVIEW REVISITED

By Chris Hovan

From the Editor...This interview by Chris Hovan with the Legendary recording master Rudy Van Gelder first ran in our July-August 1999 issue. At that time the Blue Note reissue series, Rudy Van Gelder Editions, was in its initial stage in the U.S. Now, six years later, the total number of RVG Editions released by the label will reach 150 titles with its September release of six more CDs. In recognition of that mark, we have decided to rerun this marvelous interview for those who have not seen it, and to refresh those who did on the art of Rudy Van Gelder. In addition, our many thousands of web readers who download our issues around the globe will get a chance to read it as we have only been posting issues for download for two years.

For many decades now, the name Rudy Van Gelder has been synonymous with recorded jazz music. The number of sessions he's done over the years easily numbers in the tens of thousands. He's been actively involved in the recording work of such quintessential jazz labels as Prestige, Impulse, Verve, CTI, and of course, Blue Note. In more recent times, Van Gelder has cut sessions for Highnote, Milestone, Reservoir, Venus, and N2K, to name just a few. In fact, drummer T.S. Monk's N2K album, *Monk on Monk*, was done at Van Gelder's and has received many critical plaudits, most recently being named Jazz Album of the Year in *Down Beat* Magazine's Annual Readers Poll. From the first time I interviewed Van Gelder in 1989 for a radio program I was producing I could sense his genuine love for the music and his great interest in the legacy he has had a hand in preserving. I found him to be no less engaging and immersed in his work, his new remastering of Blue Note classics in particular, when we had occasion to again speak one evening in May of this year (1999).

from people in the record business, private record labels at the time, and I started recording for them. That's how I got into it.

The first record I ever made that was sold as a commercial record was one of Joe Mooney, who was an organ player working around here at the time with Bucky Pizzarelli and a bass player by the name of Bob Carter. It was a working trio and I recorded them for this company called Carousel Records and it was actually available for purchase. It was played on the radio and everybody liked it. There was this station in New York, WNEW. The disc jockey was Al Collins and he used to play that every afternoon and so it got to be quite popular.



CH: When you started out, how much of the recording equipment was available for purchase and how much did you end up designing and constructing yourself?

RVG: When I first started making records, which was non-commercially, there was nothing available. That was how I got into it, radio and HAM radio, and I used to construct my own equipment. There were no commercial companies making recording consoles as they are today. The major record companies all built their own and if you wanted to do anything you had to do it yourself. Which I did. That's how I started. How much did I end up designing? Of course, it was everything. The only commercial designs were available through radio equipment manufacturers. They had consoles for radio purposes and that was my first console, which was actually a modified radio console. A neat little thing too. It had one meter, but it made some very nice records, some of which I'm remastering right now.

Chris Hovan: For those readers who may not be as familiar with your career, tell me briefly about how you got involved in the recording business.

Rudy Van Gelder: Well, I was always involved in recording when I was a kid. It got to be a business shortly thereafter. I used to record my friends, many of whom were amateur musicians. I used to do it at my parents' house and then people heard about that and then I would get calls from musicians and singers in the neighborhood and they would want me to record them, which I did, making demos and that sort of grew for quite awhile. Then I started getting calls

CH: Tell us about how you met Alfred



Rudy Van Gelder (left) at work, pictured with Blue Note's Alfred Lion at a recording session at New York's Half Note in 1960. Photo ©Mosaic Images

Lion and subsequently began to record for Blue Note.

RVG: I had been recording for various independent jazz labels at the time and had never met Alfred and I recorded a band for the musician called Gil Melle. He had a nice little band and came to me through this other label, I think it was Progressive Records. Alfred acquired that record, he bought it and released that on Blue Note as a 10" LP and then he wanted to make another one. At that time, Alfred was going to a studio in New York which was incidentally also a radio studio, WOR studio in New York, and they had a business of making their recording facilities available. So, that's where Alfred went and he took that album to the engineer there and he said, "I want it to sound like this." So the engineer listened to it and told Alfred, "Look, I can't make it sound like that, you better go to the guy who did it." So that's what happened. Alfred came to me and stayed forever after.

CH: You have said that the Rudy Van Gelder "sound" owes a lot to Alfred Lion and the Blue Note legacy. Please explain how Blue Note had an impact on your own development as an engineer.

RVG: In all honesty, I don't want to say that was the whole thing, but he was a large part of it and most of it was his concept of how he wanted his own records to sound and how he approached that and the task which he gave me to make sure that I could get for him what he wanted out of the musicians that he brought in. So, in that way I was subject to this on-going discipline. That formed the foundation of what I did later for different producers and different types of music. Alfred was really the first client who became the foundation of a business for me. Every session he made I recorded for him, so that label got a distinctive

sound that way. There was a certain consistency and the people who bought those records would look forward to what was coming next because they knew the record would have a good sound. The musicians were all of a certain caliber and he would get a good performance out of them. So that's all what blended together to launch my adventure in this thing.

CH: In a previous interview with me, you discussed how you tried to give each label its own identity soundwise. Without getting too specific or technical, explain how you approached that and how you approached the development of Blue Note's sound.

RVG: I would like to modify something of what you said, you say it's "my sound", really what it is is my feeling and my approach to the musicians I'm recording at a particular session. I really don't like to think of it as being "my sound." What I'm doing really is trying to let the musicians be heard the way they want to be heard. What it really is is the musicians' sound

Alfred [Lion] would be very meticulous, well-rehearsed, and he would come in and see that everything was going well and he knew what he was going to get before he came into the studio. There were other labels at that time where the producers were much looser and they would just come in and see how things went. And the musicians and the music would very much reflect that. There were two ways of looking at it and that's reflected in the way these records sound. The difference is in the producer. [Alfred] had a feeling for the music and when it was working and when it wasn't working. He was very good at that. He knew when things were working. Now that's not to say that the other producers did not know. It's just that he was the epitome of that kind of producer. He understood what was happening and actually working with him all those years allowed me to understand what is happening and that's one of the things I'm always grateful to him for.

CH: How did the invention of stereo effect your approach to recording jazz?

RVG: That was a problem for everyone and not just me. There was no artistic rush to get into stereo from the people I worked for. They had to get into it because they had to get into it. As a matter of fact, for quite awhile Alfred and others too had to be making...this is pretty important that you understand this. They had to make two products from the same session. They had to make a mono release in order to have anyone buy it and they had to make a stereo release to make that available to people who were buying stereo. And then of course

when the stereo LP came in there was this question of compatibility. Who wants to buy two albums of the same music? You had to make both available and that became very difficult so what happened was everything that was made in Hackensack was mono. Even towards the very end when we were recording two-track we weren't listening in stereo. We were recording in two-track and we were listening in mono because there was only one speaker in Hackensack in the control room and only one speaker in the studio. So how could you listen in stereo when you only have one speaker? And all the judgments, Alfred's judgments, as to mix and balance, and mine too and the musicians too and how they sounded in relationship to each other, and all that during the creative part of those recordings was done in mono. It couldn't be any other way. Towards the end we were running two-track sessions but no one had ever listened to them. So there was no particular attention or attempt at creating a stereo field at that time.

CH: Please discuss your approach to the new Rudy Van Gelder Edition Blue Notes in terms of working with the stereo and mono tapes and deciding which format to use for the new master.

RVG: My approach was totally different from what I had heard in the previous CDs. This was first time I had any opportunity to deal with those tapes. Once or twice they sent to me both the mono and stereo versions, which I described to you a minute ago, and the mono would sound much better for obvious reasons, because no one who had been involved in the creation of the original session had ever listened to stereo, but everyone had listened to mono. So I tried to convince them to release the mono version even though it had previously been issued as stereo because I felt that the mono version sounded as if Alfred would have wanted it to be that way. And that is really my goal here. However, there are plenty of albums in this series that are in very good stereo. Until now no one has heard my version of what these early recordings should sound like on CD.

CH: Tell us how this whole project came about for remastering the classic Blue Note albums.

RVG: The concept of it came from Hitoshi Namekata. He's the one that runs the Blue Note label in Japan for Toshiba-EMI. He wanted me to do it and he called Michael Cuscuna and Michael called me to see if I was interested and it ended up that absolutely I would be, just as long as I could get the original tapes whenever possible. It had nothing to do with Blue Note New York other than Michael



Performance artist Laurie Anderson, returns to Playhouse Square with her solo work "The End of the Moon," for one 7:30 pm show Sunday, November 6 in the Palace Theatre. Tickets are on sale at the Playhouse Square Ticket Office; online at www.playhousesquare.com or by phone at 216-348-5271 or 800-766-6048.



Shemekia Copeland will be appearing at Fat Fish Blue on Wednesday, October 12 at 8 pm. Her new Alligator album THE SOUL TRUTH has just been released and is reviewed in this issue. For ticket information, call 216-875-6000, or visit online at www.fatfishblue.com. Photo by Larry Busacca courtesy of Alligator Records



Bonnie Raitt will be appearing at the Palace Theatre Wednesday, October 12 at 7:30 pm. Her new album SOULS ALIKE will be released September 13 on Capitol Records. Tickets are on sale at the Playhouse Square Ticket Office; online at www.playhousesquare.com or by phone at 216-348-5271. Photo by Sam Jones courtesy of Capitol Records.

as a producer. Subsequently, there are few issues being made in the United States. They are different. They have extra tracks on them. You see, the concept of this was to duplicate the original LPs as much as possible. They [Japan] didn't want any of the out takes or none of the additional tracks, they wanted it just as it was issued originally. Of course, that made me feel even better.

CH: How long have you been engaged in this project?

RVG: I've made a hundred albums on this RVG series in Japan. I've already done this. I've been working on this since 1998 for the whole year of '98 and now I'm doing the second hundred, as opposed to the relatively small amount for the U.S. So you really can't compare the two.

CH: Some have said that these new remasters possess a sound that is warmer and much more akin to the original vinyl. How do you feel about that?

RVG: I was so happy to hear you say that because that's my goal. I really want it to sound like that because that's what Alfred heard. No one heard it off a CD. I want people to hear the music with the warmth and the energy and all the things that Alfred and Francis Wolff put into it. I really feel that I'm commissioned to do that. I'm driven by that. That's exactly what I'm trying to do and if someone says that then they understand what I'm trying to do and that's really gratifying.

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum turns 10

It has been 10 years now since the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum opened its doors at the foot of East 9th Street in Downtown Cleveland. The very unique I. M. Pei designed building housing the Rock Hall is a now very familiar landmark on the city's coastal skyline. Since it opened in September, 1995 more than 5 million people have visited the Rock and Roll Hall - and most of them are from out of the area. Many of its visitors are from Europe and Asia, as well as all parts of North and South America.

It is estimated that the Rock Hall has been responsible for injecting over \$1-billion into the Cleveland area's economy in its 10 years. During that time the museum has established itself as a unique and important cultural institution, as it fulfills its mission not only to preserve, study and interpret rock and roll and its impact on society, but also to be a top tourist destination and economic driver in Northeast Ohio.

To commemorate its 10th Anniversary, the Rock Hall is announcing plans to open a new Library and Archives in December 2007 at the Cuyahoga Community College campus in downtown Cleveland. The 18,000-square-foot facility will be housed within the college's new Center for American Music and Recording Arts. In addition to the announcement of the new Library and Archives facility,

the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will also kick-off a year-long celebration the weekend of September 24-25 with half-price admission and giveaways, including a trip for two to see the Rolling Stones perform live in Las Vegas. Over the years, the Rock Hall has offered a plethora of exhibits, concerts, special events, traveling exhibitions, symposiums and much, much more.

I recently went to a concert at the museum's intimate theatre featuring blues legends David "Honeyboy" Edwards and Aaron Moore. Both current Chicago residents, "Honeyboy" and Moore both hail from Mississippi. Honeyboy was born in 1915 and in 1942 folklorist Alan Lomax caught him on tape while doing field recording for the Library of Congress. The guitarist/singer one is of the last of the original acoustic Delta blues players.

Boogie Woogie pianist Moore is another one preserving a classic music style. Aaron is somewhere in the vicinity of 80 himself, although his exact age seems to be a something no one agrees on. No matter, these two guys, who performed both separately and together, were a gas to experience. They broke up the performances with a bit of spoken word blues history via a question and answer session very well conducted by the Rock Hall's Vice-President of Education and Public Programs Warren Zanes.

Michael Frank of Earwig Records also came along with them and played some harp. "Honeyboy" has a DVD out which



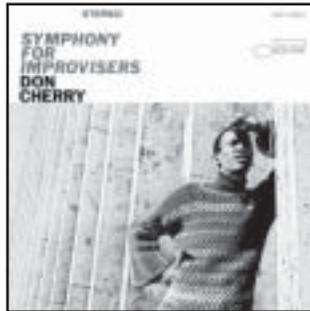
THE RUDY VAN GELDER EDITIONS



From 1953 to 1967, Alfred Lion produced a body of work that ranks as the most innovative series of recordings in modern jazz. Almost all of these masterpieces were documented by the extraordinary Rudy Van Gelder; a self-taught engineer who more than set a new standard. Devoid of caution or timidity, he captured the full power and rich sound of jazz ensembles with dazzling clarity. His contribution to the focused approach that Blue Note took at every stage of any album was immeasurable. Decades later, Rudy agreed to take a second look at the original recordings, bringing them into the digital domain with the same skill and focus. Blue Note has just released twelve more RVG Editions. If you think you've heard these gems before, listen again.



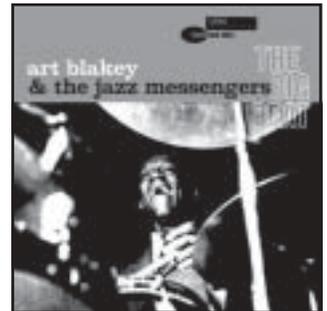
Fuego, Donald Byrd



Symphony for Improvisers, Don Cherry



Music from 'The Connection', Freddie Redd



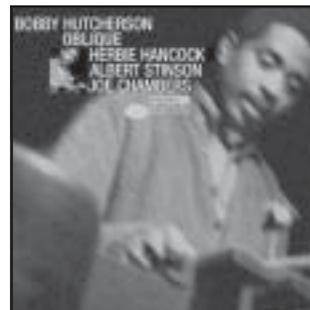
The Big Beat, Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers



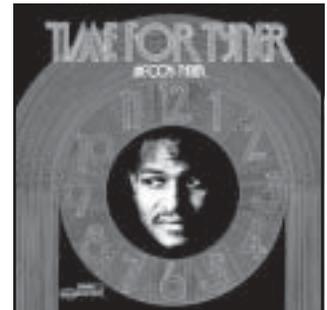
Sunday Morning, Grant Green



Inventions & Dimensions, Herbie Hancock



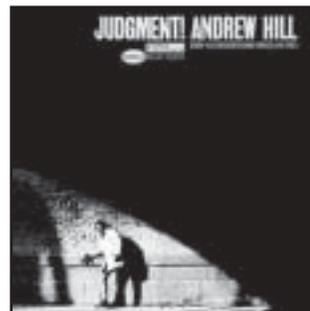
Oblique, Bobby Hutcherson



Time for Tyner, McCoy Tyner



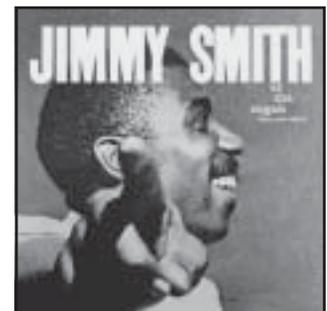
Boss Horn, Blue Mitchell



Judgement!, Andrew Hill



Think!, Lonnie Smith



At the Organ, Vol. 3, Jimmy Smith

And Six More Coming September 13...

Let Me Tell You 'Bout It, Leo Parker
Down With It, Blue Mitchell

That's Where It's At, Stanley Turrentine
Reach Out, Hank Mobley

Turning Point, Lonnie Smith
The Sounds of Jimmy Smith, Jimmy Smith

Coming September 27

A Major Find on Blue Note...
Never Before Released!

Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane Live at Carnegie Hall

These newly-discovered sonically-pristine concert tapes from Carnegie Hall in November 1957, found in the Voice of America archives at the Library of Congress in Washington DC earlier this year, capture 51-minutes of remarkable music from two legends at the height of their powers.



will be reviewed in the Holiday Gift Guide section of our November-December issue. This concert was part of the museum's Legends Series.

The Rock Hall also sponsors the Hall of Fame Series, which brings Hall of Fame inductees together with fans in an intimate setting to discuss their careers and often perform.

In November plans are underway for the 2005 installment of the annual American Music Masters Series, an annual event that celebrates the lives and careers of rock and roll's early influences. Previously featured in the series, which began in 1996, were Woodie Guthrie, Jimmie Rodgers, Robert Johnson, Louis Jordan, Muddy Waters, Bessie Smith, Hank Williams and Lead Belly. This year they will be celebrating Sam Cooke, who was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in the inaugural class of 1986. This year the series will take place the first week in November with concerts on November 5 and 6 (details to be announced soon).

The American Music Masters Series includes a main concert, a series of smaller concerts and educational programs, typically with guest speakers, lectures, films and a symposium. Check out www.rockhall.com for information as it is released. We will also have a good deal of info in our November-December issue, so stay tuned for more details.

Happy birthday to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame + Museum...and we wish them many more to come!
Bill Wahl

Freddy Cole to perform for Fundraiser

Jazz singer Freddy Cole will perform in a "New York Kind of Feeling," the theme for the annual fundraiser for Access to the Arts, a local nonprofit organization. The event will take place Saturday, November 5, at The Country Club, 2825 Lander Rd., Pepper Pike. Cocktails will be at 6:30 p.m. and dinner at 7:30 p.m. Ticket price is \$150 per person.

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Freddy, the younger brother of Nat (King) Cole, and his trio will entertain in a New York nightclub atmosphere during dinner, singing a combination of jazz, blues and pop songs.

John Hellman, Diane Welsh, and Joan Fountain, chairpersons, will organize the silent auction. Throughout the year, Access to the Arts provides art and entertainment to the elderly and the ill with quality live performances and radio broadcasts.

BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

New Release blues... . I hope everyone had a great summer and enjoyed the many blues festivals across the land. As fall comes, it's time to pick up the CDs that will get you through the winter months. Here's what's on tap for your early fall listening enjoyment: **Floyd Dixon- *Fine! Fine! Thing!***; **Jimmy "T99" Nelson- *The Legend***; **North Mississippi Allstars- *Electric Blue Watermelon***; **Bobby Rush- *Night Fishin'***; **Angela Strehli- *Blue Highway***; **Blues Traveler- *Bastardios!***; **Eric Burdon- *It's My Life***; **B.B. King- *80***; **Bonnie Raitt- *Souls Alike***; **Duke Robillard- *A Special Evening with and Friends* (DVD)**; **Buddy Guy- *Bring 'Em In***; **The Detroit Cobras- *Baby***; **Bettye LaVette- *Own Hell To Raise***; **Houston Person- *All Soul***; **Champion Jack Dupree with TS McPhee- *Dupree 'N' McPhee; The 1967 Blue Horizon Session***; **Johnny "Guitar" Watson- *What The Hell Was That- The Funk Anthology***; **Jimmy Witherspoon- *Plus***; **Jimmy Smith- *The Sounds Of***; **Hubert Sumlin- *Blues Party***; **Hubert Sumlin- *Healing Feeling***; **Dr. John- *Live at Montreux 1995/1986***; **Big Mama Thornton- *In Europe***; **Charles Brown & Friends- *Greatest Christmas Hits***; **Willie Dixon- *Boss of the Chicago Blues***; **Mississippi John Hurt- *D.C. Blues- The Library of Congress Recordings, Vol. 2***; **Snooks Eaglin- *New Orleans Street Singer***; **The Siegel- Schwall Band- *Flash Forward***; **Delbert McClinton- *The Cost of Living***; **Magic Slim & The Tear Drops- *Anything Can Happen***; **Elvin Bishop- *Getting' My Groove Back***; **Duwayne Burnside & the Mississippi Mafia- *Under Pressure***; **Louisiana Red- *No Turn on Red***; **Tab Benoit- *Voice of the Wetlands...*** **And the winner is... . Liv-**

ing Blues Magazine has announced the results of the 2005 Living Blues Awards. The readers took the following to the top: **B.B. King-** Male Blues Artist of the year; **Etta James-** Female Blues Artist of the year; **Bobby Rush-** Best Blues Album of the year; **Percy Mayfield-** Best Blues Album of 2004 (New Recording)- *Folk Funk*; **Percy Mayfield-** Best Blues Album of 2004 (Historical Recording)- *His Tangerine and Atlantic Sides*; **Charlie Musselwhite-** Most Outstanding Musician- Harmonica; **Bobby Rush-** Best Live performer; **Alvin Youngblood Hart-** Most Outstanding Musician- Guitar; **Ray Charles-** Most Outstanding Blues Singer; **Pinetop Perkins-** Most Outstanding Musician-piano. Meanwhile, in the other corner, here's what the critics had to say: **Robert Lockwood, Jr-** Male Blues Artist of the Year; **Mavis Staples-** Female Blues Artist of the year; **Carey Bell-** Most Outstanding Musician- Harmonica; **Jody Williams-** Most Outstanding Musician-Guitar; **Etta James-** Most Outstanding Blues Singer; **Pinetop Perkins-** Most Outstanding Musician- piano; **Mavis Staples-** Comeback Artist of the Year; **Big James Montgomery-** Most Outstanding Musician- horns; **Bobby Rush-** Best Live performer; **Willie Kent-** Most Outstanding Musician- bass; **Sam Carr-** Most Outstanding Musician- drums; **Chuck Campbell-** Most Outstanding Musician- other-pedal steel guitar; **Gatmouth Brown-** Best Album of the Year (New Recording)- *Timeless*; ; **Percy Mayfield-** Best Blues Album of 2004 (Historical Recording)- *His Tangerine and Atlantic Sides...* . **RIP blues...** . Blues Guitarist **Little Milton** tragically passed away last month after a stroke. Milton, who was riding high on the strength of his new release, *Think of Me*, was one of the best selling blues artists of the 60's with such classics as *The Blues Are Alright*, *We're Gonna Make It*, *Feel So Bad*, *If Walls Could Talk* and *Baby I Love You*. Well, that's it for this month. See Ya!

Cleveland Fats The Schwartz Brothers DC and the Continental

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We only bring you the Cream of the Crop!



**THELONIOUS MONK QUARTET
WITH JOHN COLTRANE
At Carnegie Hall
BLUE NOTE**

When I first heard this newly-found recording of Monk & Trane was coming, I was indeed a bit skeptical. Remembering an album 12 years ago of Monk & Trane live at the 5 Spot issued on Blue Note, my skepticism is no wonder. That was an amateur recording at best. In my review of that album I ended with "I can strongly recommend this disc to those who collect music by either artist, but others who are just beginning collections should take heed of the sound limitations and should weigh that aspect into your purchase consideration, if, in fact, sound quality is even a factor of such decisions. For those whose philosophy is that music outweighs all else - there is plenty of it to feast on here."

Well...you need not worry about any of that here.

The tapes with the Monk/Trane portion of a concert Thanksgiving Eve in 1957 were recently discovered at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. earlier this year. The concert was recorded by Voice of America for a radio broadcast. The amazing part is that these are indeed pristine tapes with amazingly clear and balanced sound quality. Also on the bill that night was Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Charles, Chet Baker-Zoot Sims and Sonny Rollins. What a night!

Monk had been working with his quartet, including Coltrane on tenor sax with Ahmed Abdul-Malik/bass and Shadow Wilson/drums, for four months at New York's Five Spot Café. By this night in November the band was in top form, and that is certainly in evidence (no pun intended) throughout this just-under-an-hour long concert. The program consists mostly of Monk-originals (and that's a good thing) including "Monk's Mood," Evidence," Crepuscule with Nellie," "Nutty," "Epistrophy" and "Blue Monk." The 9-1/2 minute version of the standard "Sweet and Lovely" is another big gem. The concert closes with an incomplete second version of "Epistrophy"

Other than three studio tracks for Riverside and the above mentioned live Five-Spot amateur recordings, this is the only other recorded document of this historically important quartet. And believe me, all the hype about the pristine recording quality is in

fact no hype at all...it is fact.

It is the rare treat like this release that makes me realize how much fun this job still is after 31 years. Get ready to scoop this one up immediately when it is released September 27!

Bill Wahl

**SHEMEKIA COPELAND
The Soul Truth
ALLIGATOR**

When a talented artist gets to compile a goodly-sized body of work, the chances increase that one or maybe several offerings will emerge as landmark works.

The Soul Truth looks to be one of the crown jewels in Ms. Copeland's catalog. A powerful twelve-song set with not a slouch among them, this disc not only holds Copeland's primo performances but also stands a testimonial to the second phase of soul music's greatest era. Songs such as "All About You", "You Can't Have That" and "Uptown Line" evoke in sound and spirit the first half of the 70's; an era not yet drowned by disco and abundant with soul tunes energized by waves of social change. African-Americans found new expression in those times and female artists often waved the twin flags of racial and sexual equality. And, oh yeah, the music was killer, too.

The classic production, provided by Steve Cropper, evokes the best of vintage works by singers like Candi Staton, Ann Peebles and Betty Wright. Copeland is full-throttle throughout as each of her workouts seems to best the one before it. Smart programmers will jump on this one as well should listeners. This will stand as one of Ms. C's very best. Just buy it.

Duane Verh

Catch Shemekia Copeland live at Fat Fish Blue Wed., Oct. 12

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ELLA FITZGERALD & LOUIS ARMSTRONG

For Lovers
VERVE

For Lovers features an 11-tune compilation from three reissued CDs originally recorded during the 1950s by two legends, vocalist Ella Fitzgerald and vocalist-trumpeter Louis Armstrong.

This album launches with the lightly swinging classic, "The Nearness of You," a 1956 recording with pianist Oscar Peterson, guitarist Herb Ellis, bassist Ray Brown and drummer Buddy Rich, extracted from the Verve recording, Ella and Louis. From that same August 16 session, the compilation team includes gems such as "Stars Fell On Alabama," "Under A Blanket of Blue," "Moonlight in Vermont," "Isn't This A Lovely Day?," and "Tenderly."

One of two tunes extracted from Ella and Friends (recorded in 1950 and 1951), "Dream A Little Dream With Me," performed with the Sy Oliver Orchestra, ranks among the best of this compilation. Of three numbers selected from the July 1957 dates on Ella and Louis Again, most enjoyable are Louie's bluesy, seductive take on "Let's Do It" and their collaboration on "Autumn In New York." The original recordings were produced by either Milt Gabler or Norman Granz.

Although Ella's sweet melodious voice at times seems disparate against Louie's gruff, gravely singing and Louie's trumpet playing takes a back seat to their vocals, this album is a nostalgic trip.

Nancy Ann Lee

JIMMY "T-99" NELSON

The Legend
NETTIE MARIE

Vocalist Jimmy Nelson was a founding member of the late 40's-early 50's Oakland blues scene alongside artists such Lowell Fulson and Ivory Joe Hunter, cutting a number of singles for West Coast labels.

These days he's a globe-trotting festival favorite sporting a honey-and-gravel voice and an aura of geniality. Supported here by Roomful Of Blues alumni including Duke Robillard, Sugar Ray Norcia and trombonist/producer Carl Querfurth, Ol' T-99 fronts a rhythm-plus-horns blues session that conjures the sound and mood of those cut by artists such as Bobby Bland for Duke.

And if the Nelson originals that prevail here are sometimes pedestrian in

content, the overall atmosphere and the leader's "frontin'" abilities carry the day. A bona-fide good-time disc.

If you can't find this one in the stores, try www.jimmyt99nelson.com.

Duane Verh

EDDIE PALMIERI

LISTEN HERE!
CONCORD PICANTE

One of the foremost Latin-jazz pianists, Eddie Palmieri celebrates 50 years in music with this 10-tune album, his third Concord Picante release (following *La Perfecta II* and *Ritmo Caliente*). He contributed six original tracks for this January 2005 New York studio date and arranged four jazz classics, all with the soloists in mind.

Palmieri leads his Afro-Caribbean Jazz Octet, featuring trumpeter Brian Lynch, trombonists Conrad Herwig and Doug Beavers, alto saxist Donald Harrison, bassist John Benitez, drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and conga player Giovanni Hidalgo. Guest artists Michael Brecker (tenor sax), Regina Carter (violin), Christian McBride (bass), Nicholas Payton (trumpet), David Sanchez (alto sax) and John Scofield (guitar) add much to this energetic outing.

Performing in settings from to ten-musician ensemble, these musicians make this one of Palmieri's most exciting and vibrant Latin-jazz recordings. The ensemble creates dense sheets of sound interspersed with fine soloing and horn section forays, especially on one of the hottest tracks, Palmieri's "Vals Con Bata." It's full of color and thrust, throbbing rhythms and blaring horn section choruses. Palmieri's arrangement refreshes "Tin Tin Deo," going for the roots on the Chano Pozo classic. A dense orchestral version of Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream" features Carter, brass and horn soloists and great section work. His core band totally remakes Thelonious Monk's "In Walked Bud" as a rousing Latin tune. The fiery title track by Eddie Harris is performed in a rousing quintet featuring Brecker's tenorisms as well as contributions from Palmieri, McBride, Hernandez and Hidalgo. Respite from the brassy, arranged numbers are the brief duo treat, "Tema Para Eydie," best spotlighting Palmieri's robust piano chops and Benitez's basslines and the melodious ballad, "La Gitana," performed as a trio

with Palmieri, Scofield and Benitez.

Able to fuse rhythms of his Puerto Rican roots with jazz influences made Palmieri a hit in the 1950s and '60s when he played New York's Palladium Ballroom and he is still capturing world-wide audiences, now with seven Grammy Awards behind him. This album is one of Palmieri's recent best and it wouldn't surprise me if he grabs another Grammy.

Nancy Ann Lee

OTIS TAYLOR

Below The Fold
TELARC

Otis Taylor says his music is trance blues and that's about as good a tag as anything I can come up with, although some would argue it isn't blues in the conventional sense.

Below The Fold is his third release for Telarc and it is a mix of blues-themed songs with a humming riff in the background, much like a sonic microwave put to music. Since Taylor uses banjo as one of his non-blues instruments on his releases, some of his tunes wander off into the same material Tony Trischka is doing with his progressive bluegrass banjo, which isn't that much of a jump.

While banjo is the main instrument in a lot of **Below The Fold**, Ron Miles' trumpet gets major spotlights including putting the riff in "Right Side Of Heaven," as drummer Greg Anton puts in the beat. Futoshi Morioka welds some sharp lead guitar into "Didn't Know Much About Education," as Ben Sollee's cello and Rayna Gellert's fiddle make the backdrop for "Government Lied," an interesting tale of German soldiers executing black and white U.S. soldiers in Belgium during World War 2. The twist is the Germans were only prosecuted for killing the white soldiers.

We have to mention the bassist here, since it is Taylor's daughter Cassie. With help from Morioka's guitar, she gets everyone's full attention on "Working For The Pullman Company" by going into her best "little girl" voice to sing a tale of waiting for her Dad to come home from his railroad job that day. It's sad and poignant, all in one shot.

In newspaper jargon, "below the fold" is the part of the front page you can't see in the newspaper box when you walk by it.

The title here is a misnomer because a lot of **Below The Fold** is front page news in itself.

Peanuts

CHARLIE HADEN LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA

Not In Our Name
VERVE

Charlie Haden serves up another masterpiece with this disc of music from mostly American composers—Ornette Coleman, Pat Metheny, Samuel Barber, and Bill Frisell. Haden reunites with Carla Bley, the primary arranger, conductor and co-producer with Haden and his wife, Ruth Cameron. The orchestra features bassist Haden and pianist Bley, with Chris Cheek and Tony Malaby on tenor saxes, Miguen Zenon on alto, Seneca Black and Michael Rodriguez on trumpet, Curtis Folkes on trombone, Ahnee Sharon Freeman on French horn, Joe Daley on tuba, Steve Cardenas on guitar and Matt Wilson on drums.

Best among the eight selections is a robust four-part medley, "America the Beautiful," a nearly 17-minute foray that includes two versions of the title tune as well as "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and Coleman's "Skies of America." The medley could become a political statement. It begins with staunch intent and ends with cacophonous chaos before it resolves to the main theme. Another highlight is the Orchestra's take on the traditional tune, "Amazing Grace," which gets a pleasing blended-horns remake that sounds real down home bluesy and spotlights various soloists, including Haden. The Orchestra also offers a satisfying version of "Goin' Home," from the Largo of Antonin Dvorak's New World Symphony.

There are some moments, especially in the melody heads, where the arrangements start out a tad hackneyed (read, historic), but when the soloists break out, the tunes become totally refreshing to hear. One of the best examples is on "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is transformed beginning with Daley's tuba solo.

This is a very listenable concept album for fans of arranged music, followers of Haden, and admirers of Carla Bley's imprint.

Nancy Ann Lee

MOJO STU Real House Blues MIDBONE

In the tradition of rascals such as John Mooney and Preacher Boy, Mojo Stu has fashioned acoustic blues into a unique and personal vehicle. Not afraid to couch his core sound of steel-bodied guitar and burly, congenial vocals in cushions of drum machines, soulful backup choruses and occasional synthetic skronks, Stu injects a vitality and individual character into traditional form and makes a whole lot of fun music in the bargain. This is an "up" session of originals that will likely stick with you once you've given it a chance. Stu is a one-man streetcorner band for the new century and it's worth the effort to run this disc down.

Duane Verh

SEAN JONES Gemini MACK AVENUE

On his 13-tune follow-up to his debut CD, *Eternal Journey*, 27-year-old Warren, Ohio-born trumpeter Sean Jones taps the talents of pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Kenny Davis, reedist Tia Fuller, keyboardist Orrin Evans, tenor saxmen Ron Blake and Walter Smith III, trombonist Andre Hayward, and drummers E.J. Strickland and Cory Rawls.

Hard bop is still Jones' domain, yet best among the seven

originals he contributes to this session titled for his astrological sign are a fun-filled blues romp ("Blues for Matt B") with his front-line players, a contemporary soul-jazz ballad ("Chillin' at da Grill") featuring Evans on electric piano and an atonal electric backbeat number, "T.V. Land." Other tunes on this session are by Fuller, Evans, Davis, Rowls, and Quamon Fowler.

date are his fluid chops, imagination, and a broad compositional palette that includes acoustic swing, acid jazz, funk, R&B and gospel. He extracts the best from his colleagues and sparkles in the spotlight on solos. This is an ear-pleasing album that shows Jones' growth and promise.

Nancy Ann Lee

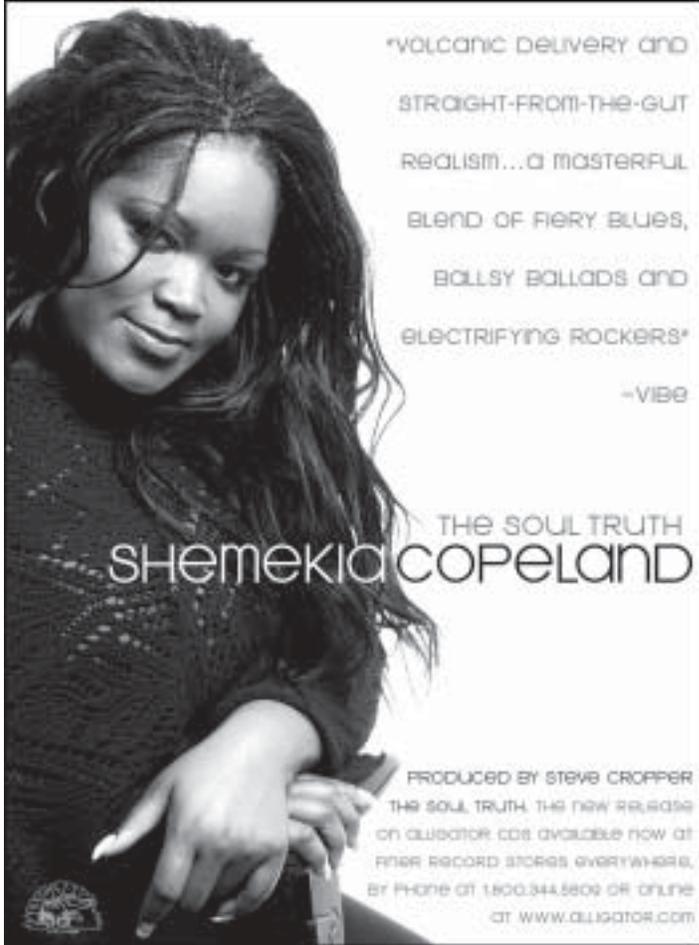
THE SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND

Flash Forward
ALLIGATOR

Those who have enjoyed the good-timey atmosphere and the quirkiest moments generated on Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues recordings should get an even larger kick from this return of the Siegel-Schwall band to disc. The fellas cut up, get loose and in general conjure a mood that recalls the confluence of blues, folk and jug-band vibes of the early revivalist 60's. The fare is mostly light-hearted and energized particularly by Siegel's inspired-sounding harp work and the signature deep-blues drumming of Chicago blues survivor Sam Lay. Lay's five feature tunes are the strongest vocal showings as well.

Flash Forward blends the authority of veteran players with remarkably youthful vitality and attitude. A nice effort.

Duane Verh



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JUDITH OWEN

Lost and Found

COURGETTE/ADA/WARNER MUSIC GROUP

The word “chanteuse” has been tossed around a lot lately when describing female singers in publicity material accompanying their CDs. Properly defined, Chanteuse is a actually a French word for a female singer, especially one who sings in nightclubs and cabarets. And for many of us, or at least to me, the word also evokes thoughts of one who is sultry and mesmerizing. So while the word chanteuse in this sense does not fit that many of today’s female singers, it does fit Judith Owen.

This is the fifth CD for the Welsh-born Owen, but I believe it is the first to get national distribution, and it is the first I’ve heard of her. Our regular readers probably know that we do not review a whole lot of singers, and I personally review very few. But as with Lizz Wright recently, I found this to be an extremely intriguing set of music.

Opening with “Smoke on the Water,” Owen takes a song by the early heavy metal band Deep Purple and twists it completely around coming up with a lounge jazz version that should be a hit in the European lounge music scene. She follows with an original, “Emily,” which certainly brings to mind Joni Mitchell while Owen retains her own personal stamp. Judith is a singer/pianist/songwriter and most of the songs here are hers. All are very well written compositions with quite meaningful lyrics.

One of the other covers is a version of the Police tune “Walk- ing On The Moon,” again twisted well away from the original version. She also does two standards, “Night and Day” and “These Foolish Things.” The sparse accompaniment also adds to the smoky mood. On some tracks Owen’s voice and piano are heard only with bass, some plus light strings or second vocalists.

The album does sport some notable guests. ‘Keb’ Mo plays steel guitar an “Train out of Hollywood (another that brings Joni to mind), Tom Scott adds sax and flute to “Sky High,” guitarist Richard Thompson, who Owen has worked with, is heard on “Night and Day” and Cassandra Wilson adds a second vocal to “Enough.”

This is simply a wonderful album blending jazz with small doses of rock, folk and blues with great success. It is one of the few treats in the onslaught of female jazz singers hurled at us recently. It will be released nationwide on September 13. A chanteuse indeed...check it out.

Bill Wahl

**Catch Judith Owen live at Wilbert’s downtown Friday, Sep-
tember 16.**

HARRISON KENNEDY

Voice Story

BLACK & TAN

Drawing upon blues, soul and r&b roots, and unafraid to shift gears from heavy to light and back, Detroit-bred vocal-ist/guitarist Harrison Kennedy lays out one of the more enter- taining and meaty acoustic-based sets in recent times. Good- timey blues, complete with kazoo, bump up against smoldering Robert Cray-like fare, searing calls for racial justice and church- steeped soul that evokes departed street-singer Ted Hawkins.

Kennedy was crossing black genres with the chart-busting 70’s Detroit group, Chairmen Of The Board. He sang lead on their eponymous hit which dared inject blues harmonica into classic Motor City r&b production. His powerhouse vocals fit the varied moods and range of *Voice Story* as needed. The minimal accompaniment is equally varied and well chosen. Periodically

discs show up that blow some urgently needed fresh air into the scene. This is one of those.

Duane Verh

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Swing Around the World

PUTUMAYO WORLD MUSIC

A compilation of various Swing groups from around the world, this 12-tune album delivers dance party music featuring musi- cians from Zimbabwe, Mauritius, the USA, Italy, France, Hawaii and Greece.

Among the most fun tracks is the Oscar Peterson Trio with Clark Terry singing his trademark, “Mumbles.” Other USA groups featured are the Squirrel Nut Zippers (“Pallin’ With Al”), and Jambalaya Cajun Band (“Hey Rock”). Duke Heitger and his Swing Band (“Swing Pan Alley”) features trumpeter Heitger (originally from Toledo, Ohio) playing a hot muted trumpet on the jumpin’ number.

The Paris-born Romane, a devotee of Django Reinhardt, of- fers an original swing composition, “Gypsy Fire,” which sounds just like the collaborations of Django and Stephane Grappelli in the famous Quintet due Hot Club de France.

Toe-tapping highlights. No matter what language the lyrics, the music is first-rate from beginning to end. A 35-page booklet featuring a photo and biograph on each band (in English, Span- ish, French) enhances this compilation disc.

A portion of proceeds will be donated to the National Dance Institute, a USA arts organization that inspires children with dis- tinctive dance programs. For more information, visit www.putumayo.com.

Nancy Ann Lee

TAJ MAHAL

The Essential Taj Mahal

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

This two Cd set will take you on a retrospective journey through the career of one of America’s more diverse musicians –Taj Mahal. From the opening track, a 1967 version of Sleepy John Estes’ “Leaving Trunk” on through 35 more songs before closing the set, Taj lends his stamp to quite a variety of compositions and styles. Although Taj wrote close to half of the tracks, he covers songs by such *very* different writers as Willie McTell, Bob Marley, Carole King, and Horace Silver.

As this set taps into his vast recordings for Columbia as well as his output for Private music, you’ll pretty much hear different musicians on every track. And some of them are quite diverse as well, such as Ry Cooder/guitar & mandolin, Al Kooper/piano, Howard Johnson/tuba, Eric Clapton and vocalists Hall & Oates, Sheryl Crow and the Pointer Sisters.

Some of the more unique tracks include “Texas Woman Blues” with Taj on vocals and upright bass accompanied only by the Pointer Sisters. Then, the next song, “Cakewalk Into Town,” fea- tures Taj, the Pointers and Johnson on tuba. He takes a reggae turn on Marley’s “Slave Driver” and delves into jazz on Silver’s “Senor Blues.” He follows that with “The New Hula Blues,” where the instrumentation is National dobro guitar, Hawaiian Steel Gui- tar, tenor, Liliu and baritone ukuleles, slack key guitar, bass and drums.

The last song, a 2005 rendition of the traditional “John Henry,” is a very tasty guitar duet with Etta Baker.

A fine sampling of the entire career of Taj Mahal, and a per- fect way to revisit for his old followers as well as a concise educa- tion for new fans.

Bill Wahl

ROBERT GLASPER

Canvas
BLUE NOTE

Pianist-composer Robert Glasper makes his Blue Note debut (street date October 4) leading a trio through mostly originals performed with bassist Vicente Archer and Damion Reid. Guesting on two tunes each are Mark Turner (tenor sax) and Bilal (vocals).

Glasper and his side team serve up a melodious, tight 10-tune mainstream set that's ear-pleasing from start to finish. He shows passion and imagination at the keys and his original tunes demonstrate his ability to write lasting stuff. Highlights include the energetic, time-switching, sonorous "Jelly's Da Beener," which really shows off Glasper's chops; the pulsating "Chant," a mystical trio number that features Bilal's Middle Eastern vocal stylings and creative contributions from all. The only tune not a Glasper original, Herbie Hancock's "Riot," features Glasper on Fender Rhodes and Turner augments with fluid tenorisms.

Glasper was raised in Houston, Texas and first-inspired by his mother who played piano, sang gospel music in church and led a band that played the jazz-blues club circuit. He attended Houston's High School for the Performing Arts and Manhattan's New School.

His first album, *Mood*, was released in 2003 on the Fresh Sound New Talent label.

It's apparent not only from the album title but from the array of diverse originals that 26-year-old Glasper capably creates colorful soundscapes. Equally talented at composing and performing, Glasper's definitely a young talent deserving of wider exposure.

Nancy Ann Lee

SISTA MONICA PARKER Can't Keep A Good Woman Down MO MUSCLE RECORDS

One of the most impressive blues performers of the past decade has been Sista Monica Parker. She certainly can belt out a vocal, but also can powerfully deliver a lyric without raising her voice, and she has always has terrific bands supporting her. Word that she had overcome serious health issues was certainly welcomed by knowing blues fans and she has another superb new recording on her Mo Muscle label

In addition to her regular band, anchored by Danny B. Ceconcini on keyboards and with guest appearances by Larry McCray and Chris Cain on guitar, she presents us with a program of 11 originals (well, one is a James Brown adaptation) and two covers to show that the "lioness of the blues" is back and as

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strong and supply a singer as ever.

The title track and the closing, *It's Good to Be Alive*, obviously relate to her overcoming the recent health problems. *Cookin' With Grease* is a rocking, funky number that has her recall her musical roots and lets folks know that when the groove is right, you really are "cooking with grease," while *Put It in the Crock Pot* is a funky tribute to James Brown and the JB's that the Godfather would likely appreciate. Both Willie Nelson's *Funny How Time Slips Away* and Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come*, have been recorded extensively. Her performance of the Cooke classic is solid but she really puts more of her stamp on *Funny*, with her superb delivery of the lyric. Of course songs like the rocking, *Show Me What You're Working With*, *Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is*, *The Truth* and *The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall*,

September

FRI 2	.....	CHOSEN FEW (R & B/DANCE!)
SAT 3	.....	DUKE SHERMAN (FROM ERIE PA)
FRI 9	.....	DUPREES BLUES
SAT 10	.....	HOT ROD BLUES DEVILLE (FROM COLUMBUS)
FRI 16	.....	THE KINGBEES
SAT 17	.....	TRAVIS HADDIX BAND
FRI 23	.....	ARMSTRONG BEARCAT
SAT 24	.....	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT
FRI 31	.....	HIPNOTIC DOG (SOUTHERN ROCK)

October

SAT 1	.....	WALLACE COLEMAN BAND
FRI 7	.....	DAVE C & THE SHARPTONES
SAT 8	.....	MIKE MILLIGAN (FROM INDIANAPOLIS)
FRI 14	.....	REAL LIFE
SAT 15	.....	THE DEACONS (EVANGELISTS OF SOUL)
FRI 21	.....	STACY MITCHHART & BLUES-U-CAN-USE (FROM NASHVILLE)
SAT 22	THE TRAVIS HADDIX BAND
FRI 28	K.G. BLUES
SAT 29	COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT



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WEDNESDAYS	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
	7 THE GEEZECATS 14 TOM BOGUS BAND 21 JASON RICCI 28 THE DON BAKER BAND FEATURING: DON BAKER CHIP FITZGERALD, DALE PETERS	5 RAY HALL BAND 12 BRYAN LEE (FROM NEW ORLEANS) 19 PIANORAMA 5 OF CLEVELAND'S BEST PIANO PLAYERS 26 SLIM GOODIE

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certainly represent what Solomon Burke once described as “the woman of today” who doesn’t take nonsense from her partner. This is not to say that Sista Monica cannot be romantic as she caresses the lyric of *Leave the Door Open* and *Surrender to Love*.

Sista Monica is as compelling a vocalist as anyone in the blues today and with this disc has added to her substantial body of recordings. This will be among my favorites of the year and is highly recommended.

Ron Weinstock

BILL RANSOM

Generations

BONGO TIME PRODUCTIONS

Adding to Cleveland’s place in jazz history, drummer Bill Ransom assembles some of the best local musicians for his spectacular self-produced, 10-tune debut CD as leader.

Joining him in the diverse array of tunes by Pat Metheny (“John McKee”), Chick Corea (“Armando’s Rumba”), Miles Davis (“Solar”), John Patitucci (“Backwoods”), Tony Williams (“Sister Cheryl”), Kenny Kirkland (“Dienda”), Jaco Pastorius (“3 Views of a Secret”) and others, are bassist Glenn Holmes, reeds man Ken Leegrand, pianists Phill Jones (8 tracks) and Jackie Warren (2 tracks), trumpeter Theodore Croker (4 tracks), and guitarist David Baker (1 track).

There’s a lot to like about this album. As one would expect, the selections give Ransom opportunities to show off his traps/percussive artistry and leadership skills, but not in ways that overshadow contributions from his team mates, especially gifted veterans Holmes and Leegrand.

This is a tastefully conceived, melodic album featuring exciting time shifts, appealing textures and a multitude of percussive colors, as well as plenty of pleasant surprises. For example, “Solar” is performed as an Afro-Cuban jaunt spiked by Ransom’s talents on hand drums and percussion instruments, underneath Leegrand’s soprano sax solo and a trumpet-tenor sax chorus. Ransom gives “Backwoods” and outdoorsy feel with a variety of shaken instruments under Holmes’ bass solo and Leegrand’s lovely soloing. One of the most beautiful tunes is the trio finale of the Leonard Bernstein ballad, “Some Other Time,” which features Warren’s light tickling of the ivories, Ransom’s soft brushwork and Holmes’ spaciouly plucked lines.

Largely influenced by Tony Williams, Ransom has worked with contemporary jazz saxophonists Najee and Marion Meadows, trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater and flutists James Newton. He continues to perform with pianist Eric Gould’s trio, which whom he’s recorded. Ransom teaches classical percussion and is percussion director at the Cleveland Music School Settlement.

At last word, Ransom was putting all the elements together to attain national distribution for this first-rate album. Here’s hoping Cleveland-based Ransom garners well-deserved widest notice for his talents as well as for assembling such a capable side team.

Nancy Ann Lee

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RENEE’ AUSTIN

RIGHT ABOUT LOVE

BLIND PIG

With eleven mostly self-penned tracks to showcase her stunning voice Renee’ Austin’s sophomore effort on *Blind Pig* is a glorious trip through road house rock, gospel, western swing and Memphis style blues.

Hitting the ground running with the kick butt rocker, *Mouth of the Delta*, Austin quickly downshifts into a lower gear with the soul infused groover, *Harder Than it Has To Be*. She then slows things down even further with *Right About Love* which is a tender ballad that allows the richness of her voice to work its way into your heart. Just when get all misty eyed about the promise of love, Austin kicks back into her house rocker mode with the scorching reminder that you can’t take your belongings with you when you’re done here, *U-Haul*. After finishing that off she romps through a gospel fueled kiss off directed at an ex-lover, *Thank You Card*, a 70’s rocker, *Meant To Be*, a swampy cover of Bobbie Gentry’s *Bugs* which would evoke a smile on the face of any CCR fan and even a cover of the Arthur Crudup classic *That’s All Right*.

She showcases the lushness of her voice again on *Strangers On a Train* which has an urbane Dinah Washington feel and on the Western Swing inspired *Mister Cowboy* which could tumble off a kd lang disc. What really sets Austin apart from virtually all her peers is the immense versatility of her voice. Her slow numbers are rich and nuanced, her gospel and swing numbers are nimble and her rockers are throaty and powerful.

While any number of singers can work their way through a good ballad or power their way to the front of a stomping rocker, very few can do both as well as Austin Pick this up and treat yourself to a terrific vocal showcase by an artist who clearly has a bright future ahead of her.

Mark Smith

FRANK MORGAN

Raising the Standard

(Live at the Jazz Standard Volume 2)

HIGHNOTE

Alto saxophonist Frank Morgan’s first HighNote disc, *City Nights*, met with rave reviews last year and served up treasured standards by Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane and others. While *City Nights* didn’t completely document his three-day 2003 gig at the Standard, this nine-tune disc—also featuring pianist George Cables, bassist Curtis Lundy and drummer Billy Hart—captures some excellent additional moments and is just as likely to garner extensive critical acclaim.

Morgan opens with a lush version of “Polka Dots and Moonbeams,” a five-minute take that shows what each of these musicians is capable of under Morgan’s leadership. He’s inspirational and his warm, woody, fluid expressions grab your attention. He and his empathetic team are adroit at reinventing warhorse standards such as “Footprints,” “Nefertiti,” “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore,” “Old Folks,” “In A Sentimental Mood” and other gems. Cables has collaborated with Morgan for more than two decades and that familiarity pays off in their telepathic interactions.

It’s great to hear the 71-year-old Morgan excel with such splendid imagination and energy in this diverse live-recorded performance that includes boppers, ballads, swing and blues. Morgan’s surely had more than his share of hard knocks since

the release of his eponymous 1955 album. Three decades would pass before he re-emerged on the scene in 1985 after his absence due to drug addiction and a series of imprisonments. He cut 14 discs between 1985 and 1996, when he suffered a stroke. To go through all of that and come back in such impressive form as you'll hear, is a testament to his talents and his perseverance. If you don't already own Volume 1, you'll want to.

Nancy Ann Lee

KENNY "BLUES BOSS" WAYNE

Let It Loose

ELECTRO-FI RECORDS

Kicking things off with the high energy *Blackberry Wine*, which takes more than a little inspiration from the oft covered *Chicken Shack Boogie*, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne rips through thirteen cuts of piano driven boogie woogie and blues.

With stylistic nods to Roosevelt Sykes, Professor Longhair, Amos Milborn and Jay McShann, Wayne takes the listener through New Orleans second line rhythms and ample doses of Kansas City inspired Swing. While the bulk of the material favors a mid-tempo groove, Wayne slows things way down for the slinky cover of Milborn's *Bewildered* and his own thoughtful ballad, *Wishing Well*. A tasty slice of soul blues makes an appearance in the form of *Blues Carry Me Home*.

Those looking for something to crank their party to the next level should head straight to the title cut which augments Wayne's fleet fingered keyboard work with greasy saxophone. Overall, the disc is a nice break from guitar driven blues.

Mark Smith

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN

I Remember Brother Ray

HIGH NOTE

With David "Fathead" Newman's tribute to his departed friend and former boss and patron, he closes a circle or sorts. It was in 1959 that the soulful tenor great stepped away from his chair in Ray Charles' band at the leader's behest with his solo debut for Atlantic-

Fathead: Ray Charles Presents David Newman. While Newman has often waxed sides of the r&b persuasion over his career, his new disc is a straight-ahead small-group jazz date featuring mellow renderings of tunes associated with the late, great Charles. The songlist is as nicely executed as it is predictable, highlighted with favorites such as "Georgia", "Hit The Road Jack" and "Ruby". And Newman is predictably at his best on the blues as evidenced by *Brother Ray's* standout track, "Drown In My Own Tears". Vibist Steve Nelson most often spells the sax man with his own workmanlike choruses.

The material here is familiar enough to spur airplay which, hopefully, will spur success in the marketplace. Both are well-deserved.

Duane Verh

CHRIS BEARD

LIVE WIRE!

NORTHERNBLUES

Son of blues guitarist Joe Beard, *Live Wire!* is the third release from his up and coming heir apparent Chris, in spite of the title being a tad on the misleading side. The critic's truth-in-advertising law makes me add that only half the disc was recorded live at a couple gigs in Michigan and Chicago while

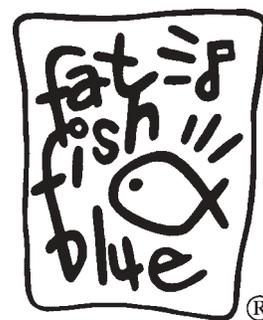
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the other half was done at a studio in Beard's hometown of Rochester, New York.

"Ten Toes Up" pretty well illustrates what the live tunes are about, a mix of R&B funk with sax support via Quinn Lawrence. "It's About Time" takes a more loping route to get to the heart of the matter, thanks to the whirling B-3 work of Alan Murphy. Things slow down for Lucky Peterson's "Tribute To Luther Allison," which shows one of Beard's many influences here.

While the studio tunes are solid, nothing really jumps out except for the cover of the aforementioned Luther Allison's "A Change Must Come," as Beard tries his best to set the neck of his guitar on fire from the friction of the strings. The oddest thing on *Live Wire!* are songs coming in multi-parts, "Tribute To Luther Allison" in two sections and "It's Over" in three. My only guess is they couldn't smooth the two live recordings of each song into a seamless number for the disc and had to chop them up like that.

Bottom line will run this way: if you like Joe Louis Walker and Robert Cray, you will probably like what Chris Beard is doing on *Live Wire!* On the other side of the coin, if you don't know any of the names I just mentioned, congrats. You are now officially in the group of blues fans who are a little out of the loop.

Peanuts

JOHN COLTRANE

**More John Coltrane for Lovers
IMPULSE RECORDS**

The name John Coltrane might not bring the thought of music for lovers to mind for most, but indeed the tenor sax great could play a ballad with tear jerking sensitivity as well as he could go on an intense firestorm excursion. He could also, of course, go anywhere in between.

This is actually volume two of the Coltrane for Lovers series (hence the "more") and, as with the first - simply titled *Coltrane for Lovers*, it offers tracks from his classic album with vocalist Johnny Hartman, cuts from his *Ballads* album and ballad cuts from some of his other albums on Impulse, plus one from a 1957 Verve date.

The tunes on this edition are "You're A Weaver Of Dreams," "You Are Too Beautiful," "I Wish I Knew," "Naima," "Autumn Serenade," "Say It (Over And Over Again)" "Wise One," "Feelin' Good," "What's

New?," and "Lush Life." It is hard to say which volume is the better as they both have several definitive Coltrane ballad performances...like "Naima" on this set, taken from his Village Vanguard album with Eric Dolphy playing bass clarinet. McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones are on hand throughout with either Jimmy Garrison or Reggie Workman on bass, with Art Davis added on second bass on one.

Without a doubt, if you enjoy ballads played on the tenor sax, you need to have this disc. Then you'll want volume 1.

Bill Wahl

BOBBY PURIFY

Better To Have It

PROPER AMERICAN RECORDS

Some of you may remember the duo James & Bobby Purify who had a classic soul hit, *I'm Your Puppet*, four decades ago. It seems that there have been at least three singers who have performed as Bobby Purify, the latest being a terrific vocalist by the name of Ben Moore, who, as Jerry Wexler says in the liner notes to the new Purify album "THE MAN CAN FLAT SING - and I sure don't mean to suggest he sings flat."

The disc was produced by the legendary Dan Penn, author of so many R&B classics including *The Dark End of the Street* and *Dr. Feelgood*. Penn's long-time partner Spooner Oldham is on keyboards on this session, and Penn co-wrote all but one song (Moore wrote *What's Old to You*) with keyboardist Carson Whitsett and Hoy "Bucky" Lindsay. Other familiar names in the studio band include guitarist Jimmie Johnson and bassist David Hood, while Charles Rose leads the horn section that includes Harvey Thompson and Wayne Jackson.

This is an absolutely delicious recording that justifies Wexler's praise. Moore delivers some wonderful songs including a terrific number, *My Life to Live Over* (a completely different tune from the old Guitar Slim number) with Purify-Moore reflecting about how he would change some things if he could live things anew.

There's a bit of topicality as Purify delivers a lyric about things being wrong for a young man to grow up when there's Nobody Home to help him grow up with Johnson adding a strong solo here. More of a classic Memphis-funk groove is present on *Somebody's Gotta Do It* with strong, punchy horns, but the entire disc is first-rate with strong playing to accompany the terrific songs and fabulous vocals from Purify-Moore. Fans of old school

R&B and deep southern soul will find few discs as satisfying as this terrific recording.
Ron Weinstock

JAMES BLOOD ULMER **Birthright** **HYENA**

Blood Ulmer has so far recorded an exceptional trio of discs during his tenure with the Hyena label. This most recent of the three is a solo effort that is a gem of quiet intensity. This former guitarist for Ornette Coleman traverses the modal bridge that connects primitive blues with avant-garde jazz and produces works that are both grounded and free-form in their nature. Coupled with a deep-blues voice for the ages, Ulmer casts spell after hypnotic spell on each track here, grabbing one's attention and holding on with a grip unexpectedly strong for a single player.

The material takes interesting turns towards and away from the blues, including a charming Caribbean-flavored portrait of Ulmer's granddad, "Geechie Joe" and a post-Ornette guitar piece "Love Dance Rag". His dark reading of the Howlin' Wolf classic "Sittin' On Top Of The World" alone justifies the disc's purchase. *Birthright* is one of this year's best. *Duane Verh*

RANDY JOHNSTON **Is It You?** **HIGHNOTE**

On his fourth outing for HighNote, guitarist Randy Johnston delivers a 10-tune mixture of standards and originals performed with Xavier Davis (piano on five tracks), Dwayne Burno (bass) and Gene Jackson (drums).

The quartet serves up a catchy, island-beat remake of the public domain classic, "Careless Love," a bopping version of Johnston's "The Jump Back," and a melodious bossa reading of the lesser known gem "I Miss You," composed by New York based pianist Sayuri Goto, as well as three others. Davis, who stinted with Betty Carter, Tom Harrell and other groups, enhances with his lyricism.

However, Johnston's playing best stands out in the trio setting with Burno and Jackson, as he proves on a lush reading of the ballad, "Nancy (With the Laughing Face)," and a lightly swinging remake of the warhorse tune, "Who Can I Turn To," one of two Gus Kahn compositions, as well as three more tunes.

Johnston's at his most expressive on this disc, showing that he can play in peak form at any tempo and improvise with

skill, clarity and warmth. This is a first-rate, engaging listen from start to finish.

Nancy Ann Lee

Berklee College of Music names Dr. Larry Simpson Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs

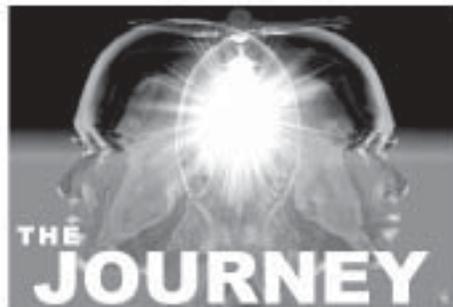
Berklee College of Music President Roger H. Brown announced the appointment of Dr. Lawrence J. Simpson to the newly created position of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the pioneering music college. At Berklee, Simpson will lead and oversee the academic initiatives of the college, including curriculum, faculty, and all areas directly related to teaching and learning. He joined the college on August 22.

Simpson comes to Berklee from Cleveland, where he has been president and chief academic officer of Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus for the past year, and headed the

Eastern Campus for the past eleven years. At Tri-C, and of particular interest to Berklee, he has been responsible for the growth and excellence of the college's arts and cultural programs, including the nationally recognized Tri-C Jazz Festival-Cleveland, and the college's recording arts and technology, and community music programs.

He managed the college's partnerships with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Playhouse Square Foundation, and serves on the boards of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (chair), the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (chair), The Cleveland Orchestra, Young Audiences of Greater Cleveland, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Downtown Cleveland Partnership.

Longtime readers of this magazine may remember that Larry Simpson was a regular contributor to these pages. We wish him the best of luck.



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